10: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1945 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

361 One may front against the back of the next. Here the individuality of the Karens is made manifest.

178 463 Originally they were, almost without exception, agriculturists and therefore kept to the outlying districts. Their villages were small for they did not have the power to organize a large society. But later, as they began to grow more prosperous and some of them became well-to-do landowners, they moved into the towns. With the spread of education they took up such posts in the cities as teachers, clerks, policemen, and officers and men in the 369 Burma Army, and in a few instances as traders. Therefore in the vicinity of each of the larger towns and cities of Burma there was, at the time of the invasion, a community of Karens usually living in a section by themselves, for they are gregarious. In Rangoon, however, many Karens were to be found renting apartments and living among other peoples in the city, and men and women were to be found in small numbers everywhere.

III

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

● 144 In appearance the Karens are not very different from the other Mongoloid peoples in Burma. Their usual colour is a little lighter than the Burmans', and is that of coffee with a generous mixture of milk. Their faces are a little flatter than the Burmans'. Having lived mostly in the hills they have a more stocky body and thicker thighs and calves than those of their neighbours. In height they are short, the men averaging a little over five feet, and the women a little less.

Young people of both sexes are attractive and robust,

10: Marshall 16-6 (ca. 1926) 1923 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

period of less than three hundred years. This is doubtless much too low an estimate, unless it refers to the time of their domicile in the particular district now occupied.

In so far as we may venture a conclusion, it is that the Karen migrated into Burma, coming from the ancient home of the early tribes inhabiting the country of China, with whom they are related by tribal, linguistic, and possibly religious ties, the full significance of which are yet to be determined.

NOTE. Various Theories of the Origin and Tribal Relationships of the Karen.—From the middle of the nineteenth century many theories regarding the origin and racial affinity of the Karen have been propounded by writers on Burma. J. R. Logan, writing in 1850 in the *Journal of the Indian Archipelago* (Vol. IV, p. 476) connects this people with the tribes in the highlands of the Kolan and Irrawaddy and in the lower bend of the Brahmaputra. Writing again in the same *Journal* in 1858 (New Series, Vol. II, p. 397) Logan maintains that the Karen language is a dialect of the Irrawaddo-Brahmaputran dialect, affected by Chinese influences as it came south. Professor De Lacouperie in his introduction to Colquhoun's *Amongst the Shans* (pp. xxxviii, ff.) argues that the Karen are descended from the ancient Tek or Tek tribes of central Asia. Early missionaries and other writers, including Dunlap (*Races of Man*, p. 295) believed that the Kachin and Chin formed a branch of the Karen race. *The Archæological Survey of Burma* has linked the Karen both with the ancient Kanran, one of the three primitive tribes mentioned in Burmese annals, and with the Miao and Yao of Yunnan (*Report* of 1916). But the Kanran were driven southwestward from the region around Prome and seem to have disappeared from history. (Pinya, *History of Burma*, pp. 5-19.) The linguistic differences between the Miao, Yao, and Karen have led to the abandonment of the idea that they are closely related. In fact, all of these views have been given up, because they were based on an inadequate knowledge of the tribes concerned.

Dr. Mason, in the *Journal, Asiatic Soc. of Bengal* (Vol. XXXVII, p. 161, 1868,) says that the first historical notice of the Karen is in Marco Polo's travels in the 13th Century. He quotes Malte Brun on the basis of Marco Polo's travels, as follows: "This country of Caridu is the southeastern point of Tibet, and perhaps the country of the nation of the Caristans; which is spread over Ava.' This statement is confirmed by old Eghai poetry in which we find incidentally mentioned the town of Bhamo to which they formerly were in the habit of going to buy axes and bills or chawwas, as they do now at Toungoo. When this poetry was composed they lived five hundred miles north of their present locality." These geographical allusions seem so vague that it appears to be impossible to build much of a theory upon them. Perhaps the lines referring to Bhamo may refer to a trading expedition and not to a line of migration. And the statement of Malte Brun is only conjecture at the most.

In their excellent work on *The Pagan Tribes of Borneo*, Hose and Mc-

[20] J. O'Riley, *Journal, Indian Archipelago*, Vol. IV, N.S. (1859), p. 6.
[21] *Ibid.*

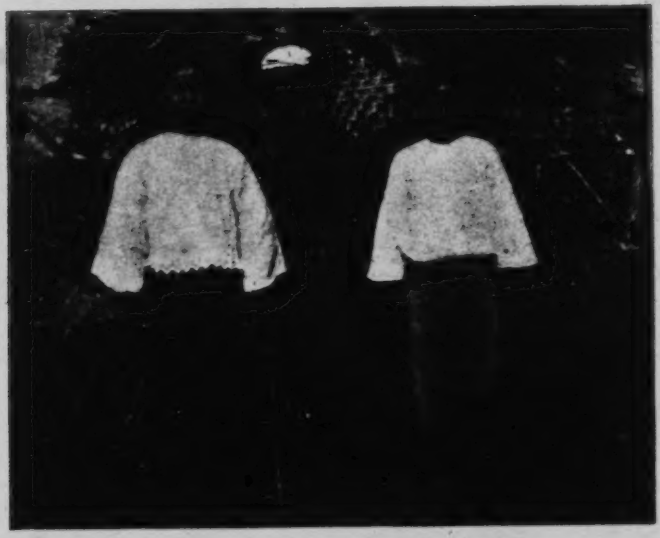
19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

101
144

Dougall say that "of all the tribes of the southwestern corner of the continent, the one which seems to us most closely akin to the Kayans [of Borneo] is that which comprises the several tribes of the Karen." (Vol. II, p. 235).

The similarity in culture and physical characteristics of the Kayan and Karen with some of the tribes of the Philippine Islands, *e. g.*, the Davao and Tinguian tribes, or between the Karen and certain of the Malays, is strong. The similarity of the name "Kayan" with that by which the Karen are known to the Burmans is also striking; but it seems fairly clear that if this accidental similarity of name did not exist, the Kayans would not have been considered closer than the Dyaks in kinship to the Karen. Dr. J. H. Vinton, who has had a life-long acquaintance with the Karen, thinks that they are resembled more by the Dyaks than by the Kayans. He expressed this view after a recent tour through Borneo. These similarities suggest that most of these tribes are not far removed from one another, and that they all belong to the Indo-Chinese stock, which, in turn, resembles the South China type, due no doubt to a common ancestry in the remote past.

291



KAREN MEN FROM THE HILLS, THAYAWADDY DISTRICT
The second man from the left is a village chief or headman. The fourth is a plainsman, who is the teacher in Penkabin Village

15: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AFI Burma
Kazan AF7

142

Profile View

144
291

Kazan Family With Traces of Negroid Blood—Front View
The rest of the villagers, to whom this family is related by the usual web of intermarriages, acknowledge the difference of features, but are at a loss to account for it.

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

dish tinge. Infants are often almost as white as European children. Red cheeks are not infrequently found in the Toungoo hills.[2]

Though we often find considerable individuality in the facial features of the Karen, they conform more or less to type, which consists of the broad flat face of the Mongolian races with high cheek-bones and widely set eyes. The eyes have narrow palpebral openings, sometimes slanted, and the characteristic fold at the nasal end. The nose is broad and flat without much of a bridge. The plane of the nostrils is tilted upward, so that the septum and nostrils are quite noticeable. The mouth is usually well shaped, but a few individuals have thick lips and a heavy negroid mouth. The teeth are quite regular and, when not stained with betel, are white and shining.

In the Pegu Hills, in the village of Ngepe, I found a family that had decidedly negroid features. (See cuts on p. 17.) The contrast with the rest of the villagers was marked. Although I could get no hint of a different ancestry in the case of the exceptional family from that of the rest of the people, it was obvious that an admixture of Negrito blood must have taken place somewhere.

The hair of the Karen is generally black, straight, and coarse. Once in a while wavy hair is found, and in rare cases it seems to be almost as kinky as that of the African. Wavy hair is not admired, but, on the contrary, is much disliked. The Karen have an abundance of hair on the scalp. It often reaches to the waist, and I have noticed a few instances in which it reached to the ground. In the early days the custom was for both sexes to wear the hair long, but now the men usually wear theirs short.

The men have scant beards which are seldom allowed to grow, being pulled out with tweezers. The mustache is prized and is coaxed to become as luxuriant as possible. In the few cases where the beard is allowed to grow, it resembles the beards of Chinese men. However, I know a Karen teacher in Bassein who has a beard that would please any inhabitant of Russia. A mole with a few hairs growing from it is greatly treasured, the hairs being allowed to grow as long as they will. Hair on the body and chest of the

[2] According to Broca's plates for classifying the color of the skin I found, in examining about ninety persons, that twenty-five matched No. 30 of his series; nineteen, No. 25; fifteen, No. 44; eight, No. 26; five each, Nos. 29 and 45; three each, Nos. 24 and 31; two, No. 21, and one each, Nos. 37, 40, 47, and 53. The lightest color found was No. 24. One of the fair ones was an infant, and the other two were men, namely, a clerk and a hill boy. The darkest complexion corresponded to No. 37, of which I found but one. No. 29, which was the color of five of the subjects examined, is a much redder hue than No. 37. All determinations of color were made on unexposed parts of the body where the skin had not been tanned by sunlight.

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma .
Karen AP7

men is rare. I can recall only one man who had a hairy chest. There is nothing unusual about the eyebrows.

The Karen seem to be susceptible to all the diseases prevalent in the country. Children are seen more often than not with distended bowels, due to worms. Enlarged spleen is the rule in the hills, where malaria is so prevalent. A number of cases in which a low vitality has caused ulcers to break out and involve the entire system have come under my notice. Epidemics of measles are much feared, due to complications induced by bathing soon after the rash has disappeared, the bathing being thought necessary. Smallpox does not cause much apprehension. The bubonic plague has never claimed many Karen victims, but the influenza was terribly fatal during the cool season of 1918-19. Tuberculosis is one of the many diseases from the West that is claiming its victims among the Karen people. Though their open-air life safeguards them somewhat, their fear of demons causes them to cover their heads at night, and they breathe only through their blankets. Those who live in the better built houses on the plains also deprive themselves of fresh air by retiring into the close inner room of their homes in order to avoid the smell of cooking, which they fear. Such superstitious practices furnish ideal breeding-places for germs. The unbalanced diet of the Karen also restricts their disease-resisting powers. One hopes that, with improved ideas on sanitation and hygiene, the people of this race will not only be relieved from the present high rate of infant mortality, but also that those surviving may attain greater longevity.

The presence of certain birth-marks on the children of Mongolian parents has been thought by some scientists to be an important criterion for distinguishing members of that race.[1] The Karen infants certainly have these blue patches on the back and buttocks. Sometimes they are so indistinct as to be hardly noticeable, and again they are clear and bright. They are irregular in shape and size. My observations confirm the accuracy of the census returns, namely, that about seven out of ten children have these marks at birth. They usually disappear by the time a child is a year old. The Karen explanation for them is that they are the stains of leaves, on which the spirits of the children sat or laid down to rest in the course of their long and wearisome journey from their former abode. These marks are thought to show that the children having

[1] *The Indian Imperial Census, 1911, Burma, Pt. I, 281-286.*

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

142
826
144

them will be strong, and mothers are glad to see them on their offspring. Perhaps they reason that if the baby spirit was able to stand the long journey necessary to come to the birth, it will endure the longer journey of this human existence.

838

I have noticed a few cases of homosexuals among the Karen, though they do not seem to be as common as among the Burmese. These individuals, who assume more or less the dress and customs of the opposite sex, have been known to contract unions with others of the same sex and live as husband and wife. The cases I found have all been on the plains.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Karen AP7

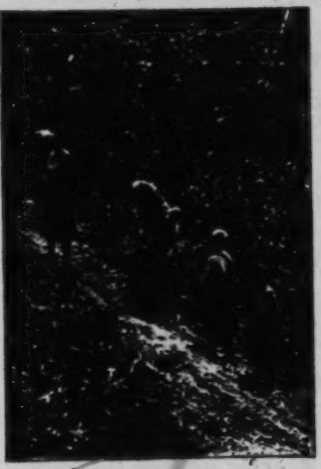
181
[231]
[622]

333. KARENS BRINGING ELEPHANTS TO MARKET.

[736]

"a spirit of equality, and governed by the moral influence of its natural heads alone." (Herbert Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*, Vol. I., p. 407.) The chief of these elders is called *Sawkè*; he gives his name to the village. The faults of the Karéns are their dirt, their addiction to drink, and a degree of superstition so extreme that a motherless infant is refused adoption for fear of turning the wrath of a vengeful demon upon the foster-mother. In epidemics of cholera and small-pox the Karéns abandon their villages in panic fear. The Karéns are shorter but of stouter build than the Burmans and Talaings, and of much fairer complexion. But their name of "white" Karén is derived from their clothing. Very characteristic is their short upper arm. Young people of splendid physique may be seen; but the conditions of life are so hard, and malaria is so prevalent in the forests, that the population remains stationary—by the census of 1891, 633,600. The toilsome Karén finds lightness of heart in the liquor he brews, a remarkable contrast to the vivacious and abstinent Burman. The contrast is borne out in the dreary wail of the Karén music and the bright and exuberant cadences of the Burmese. Karén children grow independent very young (No. 355), and begin their heavy outdoor labour soon. Early physical exertion possibly accounts for the second moral quality noted above. The hill-cultivation is greatly at the mercy of the seasons, from burning-time in April to harvest in October. The hardship is aggravated by a superstition of divination-bones (*Kyeyyo*) which often tabooes the most eligible sites. Scarcely have the crops been garnered than the clearing of a fresh site for the village begins.

[164]
[144]
[533]
[866]
[487]
241
[784]



334. KARENS GOING OUT TO WORK.